



JANUARY 2021

Function QUERI

Optimizing Function and Independence
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Caregivers FIRST: How has COVID-19 impacted family caregivers?

As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a disruption in the daily lives of all citizens. In April 2020, the Function QUERI team rapidly implemented IRB-approved COVID-19 questions to our existing caregiver survey to explore how the pandemic has affected family caregiver health and well-being. From April to October 2020, Function QUERI collected 111 surveys which included the new COVID-19 questions. The team is working to develop a manuscript that will compare the post-COVID-19 responses to the 320 surveys collected prior to the pandemic, including self-rated health, loneliness, overall quality of life, and social support.

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The Caregiver's Perspective of Our Training Program

As we wrap up the first iteration of the Function QUERI grant, one key goal for our team is to evaluate caregiver value and experience with the iHI-FIVES (now Caregivers FIRST) intervention. Over two years of program implementation (2018-2020), the team interviewed 40 family caregivers from 8 VA facilities who participated in at least 2 of the 4 training classes. The team analyzed results and developed an overall summary on how the caregivers learned about the training program, what barriers to participation they encountered, supports they have utilized since participating, and general program feedback. Function

QUERI is finalizing a summary report that will be shared with the 8 participating facilities and key lessons learned have been incorporated into our newly branded Caregivers FIRST implementation toolkit.

Caregivers FIRST Released Nationally

On October 20, 2020, Caregivers FIRST was released nationally to all VA Medical Centers in partnership with National VA **Caregiver Support Program (CSP)**. For FY21, Caregivers FIRST is part of a strong practice performance metric for the Program of General Caregiver Supports and Services. As part of our national dissemination package, all sites can access:

- Caregivers FIRST Toolkit,
- SharePoint site curriculum materials,
- Implementation training videos,
- Quarterly Diffusion Network calls, and
- Monthly technical assistance "office hour" calls.

In December, the Function QUERI team hosted our first Diffusion Network quarterly call since national launch of the program where about 65 VAMCs shared their plans to implement Caregivers FIRST this fiscal year. This month, Function QUERI collaborated with national CSP to distribute an organizational readiness survey to all CSP program managers to assess their facility's plan and readiness to implement Caregivers FIRST.



Mentoring Core

The Function QUERI Mentoring Core will be recruiting for two clinician and/or non-clinician scientists to begin in October of this year. Trainees in fellowships sponsored by VA's Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) and other early career VA researchers (e.g. Career Development Awardees) will

be eligible to apply. Ideal scholars will be early career scientists seeking additional training and hands-on opportunities in the field of implementation science. Anyone interested should reach out to **Caitlin Sullivan** via email with additional questions: caitlin.sullivan2@va.gov.

STRIDE: Addressing Immobility

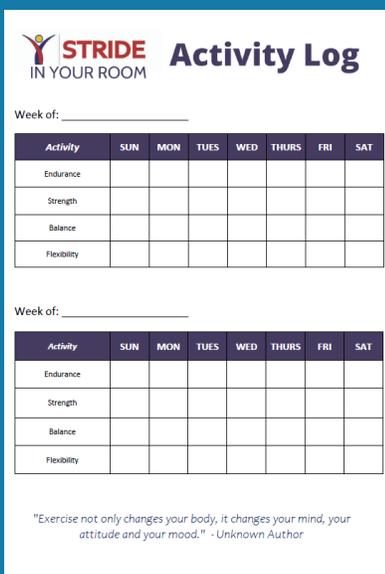
More than one-third of adults 70 and older are discharged from the hospital with a new disability that was not present before admission. Loss of functional ability during hospitalization contributes to loss of muscle mass and overall weakness, putting immobile patients at heightened risk. Recently, there has been a push toward **age-friendly care** in VA, giving rise to the spread of Safe Patient Handling & Mobility (SPHM) programs. However, prioritization of inpatient mobility is still lacking in the acute care setting and STRIDE seeks to bridge this gap in care. STRIDE is a supervised walking program and aims to increase the amount of time spent

safely out of bed and walking during inpatient hospital stays. Mobility is an important facet of general health and well-being and STRIDE is a way to effectively integrate inpatient mobility into clinical workflow. Interested in launching a STRIDE program? Keep reading!

STRIDE: National Diffusion

As we announced in a previous newsletter, STRIDE was designated as a **Promising Practice** after being a VHA Shark Tank competition finalist in 2018. Since then, STRIDE has garnered an endorsement for national dissemination from VA AUSH-DEAN **Carolyn Clancey** and support from the **Diffusion of Excellence**.

Through various channels and funding mechanisms, STRIDE has been implemented at 19 VA facilities with several more in progress. VISN 23, for example, has chosen to implement STRIDE in FY21 as a VISN-wide Strategic Initiative. Others have launched STRIDE programs with little more than our delivery toolkit. That said, the VA would like to better understand how to best spread evidence-based practices like STRIDE throughout the enterprise. In partnership with the Diffusion of Excellence, Function QUERI will enroll a total of 32 VA facilities as part of our new "2.0" grant. If you would like to be part of this research by bringing STRIDE to your facility using our resources, please contact STRIDE@va.gov.

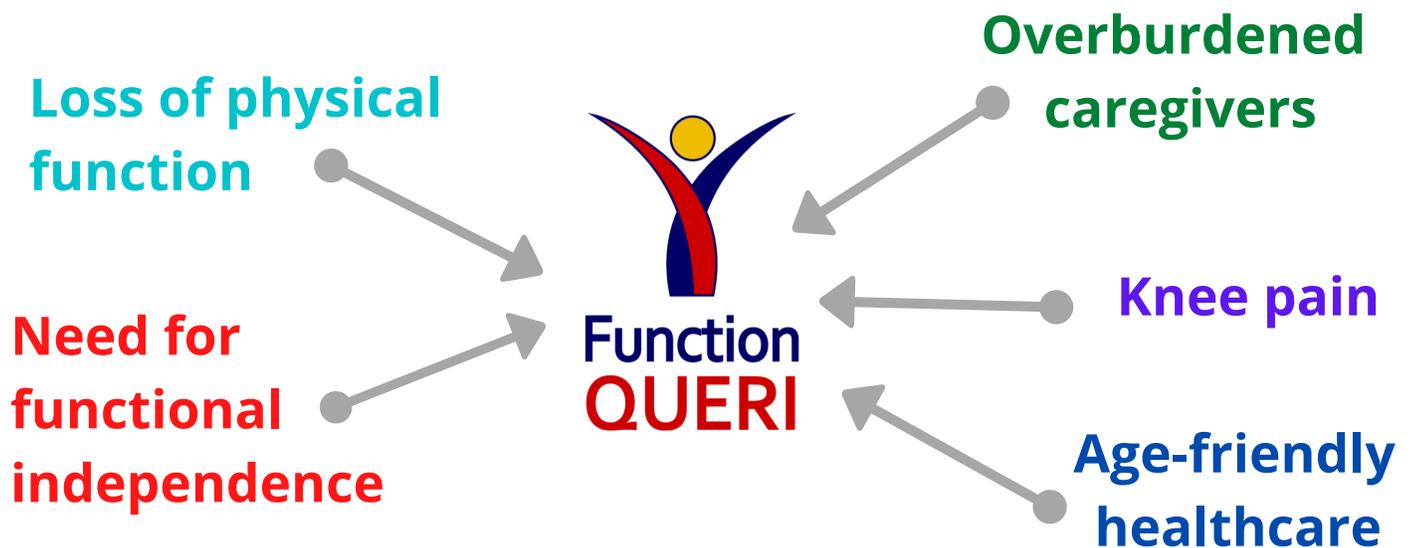


The image shows a sample of the STRIDE Activity Log form. It features the STRIDE logo and the title 'Activity Log'. Below the title, there are two identical log grids. Each grid has a header row for days of the week (SUN, MON, TUES, WED, THURS, FRI, SAT) and a header column for activities (Endurance, Strength, Balance, Flexibility). The grid cells are empty, indicating it is a blank log. At the bottom of the form, there is a quote: "Exercise not only changes your body, it changes your mind, your attitude and your mood." - Unknown Author.

STRIDE in your Room (SiYR) Updates

As you may have seen in a previous edition of our newsletter, the STRIDE team has developed STRIDE in your Room (SiYR) kits for facilities to extend STRIDE to patients in isolation and once they are released from the hospital. The kits include an exercise guide, activity log (left), Therabands, exercise blocks,

stress ball, pedometers, and a STRIDE pen and magnet. Thus far, a total of 7 sites have received kits. Three sites began piloting kits in the fall and 4 more received kits in January. If you would like to request kits, please email STRIDE@va.gov with the number of kits you'd like and the best mailing address.



INTERESTED IN ENROLLING YOUR SITE IN FUNCTION QUERI 2.0?

We are currently looking for sites interested in implementing one of our three clinical programs to enroll in Function QUERI 2.0!

- **Caregivers FIRST** - caregiver skills training program
 - Enrolling now for Fall 2021
 - Contact CaregiversFIRST@va.gov with any questions
- **STRIDE** - inpatient supervised walking program
 - Enrolling now for Spring 2021
 - Contact STRIDE@va.gov with any questions
- **Group PT** - group Physical Therapy program
 - Will begin enrolling in the Spring for Fall 2021

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS?

Caregivers FIRST:

<https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/caregivers-first>

STRIDE:

<https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/the-stride-program>

Group PT:

<https://marketplace.va.gov/practices/group-physical-therapy-for-knee-oa>

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